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JOE MILLER's JESTS.

BEING
A COLLECTION

OF

The most Brilliant *JESTS*, and most pleasant
short Stories in the English Language.

The greater Part of which are taken from
the Mouth of that facetious Gentleman
whose Name they bear.



Printed and Sold in London.

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JOE MILLER'S JESTS.

JOE Miller going with a friend one day along Fleet street, and seeing old Cross the Player, who was very deaf, and unwilling that any one should know it, on the other side of the way, told his friend he should see some sport; so beckoning Cross with his finger, and stretching open his mouth as wide as ever he could, as if he hallooed to him, though he said nothing; the old fellow came puffing from the other side of the way. What a pox do you make such a noise for, do you think one can't hear?

Joe Miller another day sitting in the window at the sun tavern in Clare street, while a fish woman was passing by, crying, Buy my soul, buy my maids! Ah! you wicked creature, said Joe, are you not content to sell your own soul, but you must sell your maid's also.

A person of quality coming into a church where several of his ancestors lay buried, after he had praised them very much for worthy men, Well, said he, I am resolved, if I live, to be buried as near them as possible.

One man told another, who used not to be clothed very often, that his new coat was too long for him: That's true, answered the other, but it will be longer before I get another.

A poor man who had a termagant wife, after a very long dispute, in which she was resolved to have the last word, told her, if she spoke one crooked word more he would beat her brains out: Why then, Ram's Horns, you rogue, said she, if I die for it.

A certain country Squire asked a Merry Andrew why he played the fool? For the same reason, said he, as you do, for want; you do it for want of wit, I for want of money.

A Wellman bragging of his family said, that his father's effigy was set up in Westminster Abbey; being asked whereabouts,

he said, In the same monument with Squire Thynne, for he was his coachman.

A certain lady finding her husband too familiar with her chambermaid turned her away immediately. Hussey, said she, I have no occasion for such sluts as you, only to do what work I chuse not to do myself.

A gentleman asked a lady at Tunbridge, who had made a very large acquaintance among the beaux there, what she would do with them all? O, said she, they pass off like the waters. And pray, Madam, said he, do they all pass the same way?

A very harmless Irishman was eating an apple-pie with some quinces in it. Arrah now, dear honey, said he, if so few of these quinces give such a flavour, how would an apple-pye taste made all of quinces.

A young gentleman playing at questions and commands with some pretty young ladies, was commanded to take a garter from one of them; but she, as soon as he laid hold of her petticoat, ran away into the next room, where was a bed: Now, Madam, said he, I bar squeaking. Bar the door,

An Irish lawyer of the Temple having occasion to go to dinner, left this direction in the key hole; Gone to the Elephant and Castle, where you will find me, and if you cannot read this, carry it to the stationer's, and he will read it for you.

Two Oxford Scholars meeting on the road with a Yorkshire ostler, they fell to bantering him; and told him, That they would prove him to be an horse or an ass. Well, said the ostler, I can prove your saddle to be a mule. A mule, said one of them, how can that be? Because, said the ostler, it is something between a horse and an ass.

An English gentleman happening to be in Brecknockshire, used sometimes to divert himself with shooting, but being suspected not to be qualified, was sent for by one of the little Welsh Justices. His Worship told him, unless he could produce his qualification, he should not allow him to shoot there, and he had too little manners. Yes, Sir, said the gentleman, any one may perceive that. Perceive what? cried the Welshman. That you have too little manners, cried the other.

The chaplain's boy of a man of war, being sent out of his own ship on an errand to another, the boys were conferring notes about their manner of living. How often do you go to prayers now? Why, answered the other, in case of a storm, or the apprehension of any danger from an enemy. Aye, said the first, there is some sense in that; but my master makes us go to prayers when there is no more occasion for it, than for my leaping over-board.

A certain lady at Whitehall, of great quality, but very little modesty, having sent for her linen-draper to bring her some hollands; as soon as the young fellow entered the room. O, Sir, said she, I find you are a man for business, for you no sooner look a lady in the face, but you have the yard in one hand, and are lifting up the linnen with the other.

King Henry VIIIth designing to send a nobleman on an embassy to Francis I. at a very dangerous juncture, he begged to be excused, saying, Such a threatening message to so hot a prince as Francis I. might go near to cost him his head. Fear

not, said old Harry, if the French King should offer to take away your life, I will revenge it by taking off the heads of the Frenchmen now in my power. But of all these heads, replied the nobleman, not one would fit my shoulders.

A Prince laughing at one of his nobles whom he had employed in several embassies, told him he looked like an owl. I know not, said the courtier, what I look like; but this I know, that I have had the honour several times to represent your Majesty's person.

A Mayor of Yarmouth, in antient times, being by his office a justice of the peace, and one who was willing to dispense the laws in the wisest manner, though he could hardly read, got himself the statute book, where finding a law against firing a beacon, or causing one to be fired, read it, Frying bacon, or causing one to be fried; and accordingly went out the next night upon the scent, and being directed by his nose to the carrier's house, he found the man and his wife both frying bacon, the husband holding the pan, while the wife turned it. Being thus caught in the fact,

and having nothing to say for themselves his worship committed them both to prison without bail or mainprize.

A country fellow subpoenaed for a witness upon a trial on an action of defamation; he being sworn, the Judge bid him repeat the very same words he had heard spoken. The fellow was loath to speak, and humed and hawed for a good space; but being urged by the Judge, he at last spoke. My Lord, said he, you are a cuckold. The Judge seeing all the people begin to laugh at him, called to him, and bid him speak to the Jury, there were twelve of them.

A gentleman speaking of Peggy Yates, the famous courtesan, who had always an abundance of fine cloaths, said she was like a squirrel, for she was always covering her back with her tail.

A gentleman said one day at table, that he could not endure a breast of mutton. You said so the other day, said another, of a breast of veal. Very true, answered the first, I do not love the breast of any

thing but that of a woman, and that goes against my stomach.

A woman who was growing big with child, who had two gallants, one of them with a wooden leg, the question was put, which of the two should father the child. He who had the wooden leg offered to decide it in the following manner: If the child, says he, comes into the world with a wooden leg, I will father it; if not, then it must be yours.

A gentleman who had been a shooting brought home a small bird with him, and having an Irish servant, he asked him if he had shot that little bird?—Yes, he told him. Arrah, by my shoul, honey, replied the Irishman, it was not worth the powder and shot, for this little thing would have died in the fall.

The same Irishman being at a tavern, where the cook was dressing some carp, he observed that some of the fish moved, after they were gutted and put in the pan, which much surprised honest Teague.—Well, now by my faith, said he, of all the christian creatures that ever I saw,

this same carp will live the longest after it is dead.

A certain gentleman happening to turn up against a house to make water, did not see two young ladies looking out at a window close by, until he heard them, he asked them what made them so merry? O, said one of them, a little thing will make us laugh.

A young fellow riding down a steep hill, doubting the foot of it was boggyish, called out to a clown that was ditching, and asked if it was hard at the bottom? Aye, answered the countryman, it is hard enough at the bottom, I will warrant you. But in half a dozen steps the horse sunk up to the saddle girths, which made the young gallant whip, spur, curse, and swear. Why, you whoreson of a rascal, said he to the ditcher, didst thou not tell me that it was hard at the bottom? Aye, said the ditcher, but you are not half way to the bottom yet.

An Englishman and a Welshman disputing in whose country was the best liv-

ing; said the Welshman, there such noble housekeeping in Wales, that I have known above a dozen cooks to be employed at one wedding dinner. Aye, replied the Englishman, that was because every man toasted his own cheese.

A person being near his end, a woman who lived in the neighbourhood sent her maid to know how he did; he bid the girl tell her mistress, he hoped he was going to the New Jerusalem. Ah! dear, said she, I think the air of Islington would do you more good.

A young lady who had been married but a short time, seeing her husband going to rise pretty early in the morning, said, What, my dear, are you getting up already? pray lie a little longer, and rest yourself. No, my dear, replied the husband, I'll get up and rest myself.

One losing a bag of money of about fifty pounds, between the Temple Gate and Temple Bar, fixed up a paper, offering reward to those who took it and should return it. Upon which the person that had it,

came and wrote underneath it to the following effect: Sir, I thank you for the offered reward, but indeed you really bid me to my loss.

One sailor coming to see another on a pay-day, desired to borrow twenty shillings of him. The monied man fell to telling out the sum in shillings, but a half crown thrusting in its head, put him out, and he began to tell again; but then an impertinent crown piece was as impudent as his half brother had been, and again interrupted the tale; so that taking up a handful of silver, he cried, Here Jack, give me a handful when your ship is paid off, what a pox signifies counting it.

A very humourous countryman having bought a barn in partnership with a neighbour of his, neglected to make the least use of it, while the other had plentifully stored his part with corn and hay. In a little time the latter came to him, and conscientiously expostulated with him about laying out his money to so little purpose. Why, neighbour, said he, pray never trouble your head, you may do what you will

with your part of the barn, but I will set mine on fire.

A gentleman asked Nancy Rochford, Why then Whig in their morning for Queen Anne wore silk stockings? Said she, because the Tories were worsted.

The famous Tom Thynne, who was remarkable for his good house-keeping and hospitality, standing one day at his gate in the country, a beggar came up to him and craved a mug of his small beer. Why, how now, said he, what times are these, when beggars must be chooser! I say bring this fellow a mug of strong beer.

Some gentlemen going into a bawdy-house tavern by Charing Cross, found a great deal of fault with the house, and of the wine, and sending for the master, told him it was sad stuff, and very weak. It may be so, said he, for my trade does not depend upon the strength of my wine, but that my tables and chairs.

A profligate young nobleman being in company with some sober people, desired

leave to toast the Devil. The gentleman who sat next him, said, he had no objection to any of his Lordship's particular friends.

A gentleman said of a young wench who constantly plied about the Temple, that if she had as much law in her head as she had in her tail, she would be one of the ablest council in England.

A certainly Lady of quality sending her Irish footman to fetch home a pair of new stays, strictly charged him to take a coach if it rained, for fear of wetting them. But a great shower falling, the fellow returned with the stays dripping wet; and being severely reprimanded for not doing as he was ordered, he said he had obeyed his orders. How then, answered the lady, could the stays be wet if you took them into the coach with you? No, replied honest Teague, I know my place better, I did not get into the coach, but rood behind, as I always used to do.

Two honest gentlemen, who dealt in brooms, meeting one day in the street, one asked the other, how the devil he could afford to un-

derfel him as he did, when he stole the fluff, and made the brooms himfelf? Why, you filly dog, replied the other, I steal them ready made.

A young gentlewoman who had married a wild fpark that had run through a plentiful fortune, and was reduced unto ftraits, was innocently faying to him one day, My dear, I want fhifts fadly. How can that be, replied he, when we make fo many every day.

An Irishman having been obliged to live with his mafter fome time in Scotland, when he came home again fome of his companions asked him how he liked Scotland? I will tell you now, faid he, I was fick all de vile I was dere, and if I had lived dere till this time I had been dead a year ago.

Mr. Dryden once at a dinner, being by a lady offered the rump of a fowl, he refufing it, the lady faid, Pray, Mr. Dryden take it, the rump is the beft part of the fowl. Yes, Madam, faid he, and fo I think it is of the fair.

A factious teacher of arithmetic who had

long been married without being able to get his wife with child; one said to her, Madam, your husband is an excellent arithmetician. Yes, replied she, only he cannot multiply.

A cowardly servant having been out a hunting with his master, they had killed a wild boar. The fellow thinking the boar stirred, betook himself to a tree; upon which his master called to him, and asked him, What he was afraid of, as the boar's guts were out? No matter for that, said he, his teeth are in.

A butcher in Smithfield, who lay upon his death bed, said to his wife, My dear, I am not a man for this world, therefore I advise you to marry our man John, he is a lusty young fellow, and fit for your turn. O dear husband, said she, if that be all, let it never trouble you, for we are already agreed upon that matter.

When his late Majesty in coming from Holland happened to meet with a storm at sea, the captain of the yacht said to the chaplain, In five minutes more, Doctor, we shall be with the Lord. The Lord forbid, answered the Doctor.

A taylor sent his bill to a lawyer for money. The lawyer bid the boy tell his master, That he was not running away, but very busy at that time. The boys comes again, and tells him he must needs have the money. Did you tell your master, said the lawyer, that I was not running away? Yes, answered the boy, but he bid me tell you that he was.

One Irishman meeting another, asked, What was become of their old acquaintance Patrick Murphy? Arrah! now, dear honey, answered the other, he was condemned to die, but he saved his life by dying in prison.

One asked his friend, Why he, being such a proper man himself, had married so small a wife? Why, friend, said he, I thought you had known that of evils we should chuse the least.

A gentleman having sent for his carpenter's servant to knock a nail or two in his study; the fellow, after he had done it said, Sir, I hope you will give me something to drink; said the gentleman, there is a pickle herring for you, and if that

will not make you drink, I will give you another.

Two gentleman, one named Chambers and the other Garret, riding to Tyburn, said the first, This would be a pretty tene-ment if it had a garret. You fool, says Garrat, don't you know there must be cham-bers first.

A lawyer being sick, made his will, and gave all his estates to fools and madmen; being asked the reason for so doing, he an-swered, From such I had it, and to such I give it again.

An Irish gentleman being with some ladies in a nobleman's garden, where was a large iron roller, told them, he thought it was the largest iron rolling stone that he ever saw.

Two Irishmen having travelled on foot from Chester to Barnes, were much tired and fatigued with their journey, and the more so, when they were told that they had still ten miles to London. By my soul and St. Patrick, cries one of them, it is but five miles a piece, let's eten walk on.

Gun Jones, who made a handsome fortune from a very mean beginning, happening to have some words with a person who had known him for some time, was asked by the other, How he could have the impudence to give himself so many airs to him, when he knew very well that he remembered him seven years ago, when he had hardly a rag to his arse? You lie, sirrah, replied Jones, for seven years ago I had nothing but rags to my arse.

A traveller coming into the kitchen of an inn, in a very cold night, stood so close to the fire, that he burnt his boots. An arch wag who sat in the chimney corner, said to him, Sir, you'll burn your spurs presently. My boots you mean, I suppose, said the gentleman. No, Sir, replied the other, they are burnt already.

A great courtier for a long time having none but daughters, his wife prayed very earnestly that she might have a boy; at last they had a boy, who when he came to man's estate proved but simple: Thou prayedst so long for a boy, said her husband, that at last thou hast got one, who will be a boy as long as he lives.

A country clergyman meeting a neighbour who never came to church although an old fellow about sixty, he gave him some reproof on that account, and asked him if he never read at home? No, replied the clown, I cannot read. I dare say, said the parson, you don't know who made you? Not I, in troth, cried the countryman. A little boy coming by at the same, Who made you, child? said the parson. God, Sir, said the boy. Why, look you there, quoth the clergyman, are you not ashamed to hear a child five or six years old tell me who made him, when you, who are so old a man, cannot? Ah! said the countryman it is no wonder that he should remember, he was made but the other day, and it is a long while, measter, since I was made.

After the fire of London, there was a act to regulate the buildings of the city; every house was to be three stories high, and there was to be no balconies backwards: A Gloucestershire gentleman, a man of great wit and humour, just after this act passed, going along the street, and seeing a little cooke gentiewoman on the other side of the way, he runs over to her in great haste; Lord, Madam, said he, how dare you walk

thus publicly in the street! And why not, pray, Sir? answered the little woman. Because, replies he, you are built directly contrary to the act of parliament; you are but two stories high, and your balcony hangs over your house of office.

A certain boy was boasting in company that he had every sense in perfection. No, said one who was by, there is one you are entirely without, and that is common sense.

Dr. Tadloe, who was a man of a very enormous size, happening to go thump, thump, with his great legs through the street where the paviours were at work in the middle of July, they laid down their rammers. Ah! God bless you, master, cries one of them, it is very kind of you to come this way; it saves us a great deal of trouble this hot weather.

Three or four roguish scholars walking out one day from the University of Oxford, espied a poor fellow by Abingdon asleep in a ditch, with an ass by him, laden with earthen ware, holding the bridle in his hand; said one of the scholars to the rest, If you will assist me, I'll help you to a little money,

for you know we are bare at present. So they consented. Why then, said he, we'll go and sell this fellow's ass at Abingdon, and as the fair is to-morrow, therefore do you take the panniers off, and put them upon my back, and the bridle over my head, and then lead the ass to the market, and let me alone with the old man. This being done accordingly, in a little time after the poor man awaking, was strangely surprised to see his ass thus metamorphosed. Oh! for God's sake, said the Scholar, do take this bridle out of my mouth, and this load off my back. Zounds, how came you there? replied the old man? Why, said he, my father, who is a necromancer, upon an idle thing that I did to disoblige him, has transformed me into an ass; but now his heart is relented, and I am come to my own shape again; and I beg you will let me go home and thank him. By all means, said the crockery merchant, I do not desire to have any thing to do with conjuration, and so set the scholar at liberty, and he went immediately to his comrades, who were by that time making themselves merry with the money they had sold the ass for. But the old fellow was obliged

to go next day to seek for a new one at the fair, and after having looked at several, his own was shown him for a very good one. O! O! said he, what have he and his father quarrelled again already, No, no, I will have nothing to say to him.

FINIS.